

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 SS-07 NSC-06 NSCE-00 SSO-00 H-03

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DRAFTED BY AF/S:DDHAUGHT: AF/S:WPO'NEILL

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AF/S - MR. O'NEILL

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 234345

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SF, US

SUBJECT: DIGGS PRESS CONFERENCE PROBLEMS

REF: (A) PRETORIA 4347; (B) STATE 226927

1. IN APPROACHES TO SAG, RECOMMEND YOU POINT OUT THAT DENYING DIGGS ACCESS TO PRESS ON TECHNICALITY HIS TRANSIT STATUS LIKELY TO CAUSE SAG CONSIDERABLY MORE ADVERSE PUBLICITY THAN WOULD ARISE FROM PERMITTING PRESS CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE POSSIBLY OUTSIDE TRANSIT AREA. IF DFA DEMURS ON GROUNDS SUCH AS UNDESIRABLE PRECEDENT BEING ESTABLISHED, EMBASSY CAN EMPHASIZE THAT NOTE FROM SA EMBASSY DATED NOVEMBER 16 (REF B) ADVISED DEPARTMENT THAT "ACCORDING TO THE ITINERARY OF THE CONGRESSMAN AND HIS PARTY, IT IS OBSERVED THAT THEY INTEND OVERNIGHTING IN JOHANNESBURG ON THE 28TH AND 30TH NOVEMBER. THE SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES HAVE THEREFORE AUTHORIZED THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE AIRPORT TO OVERNIGHT IN JOHANNESBURG ON THESE DAYS WHILE IN TRANSIT. VISAS WILL THEREFORE NOT BE REQUIRED." AUTHORIZATION CONTAINED NO RESTRICTIONS REGARDING MEETINGS WITH PRESS OR ANYONE ELSE. FOR SAG NOW TO DENY OPPORTUNITY FOR DIGGS TO MEET PRESS AT AIRPORT
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WOULD APPEAR TO US TO BE AT ODDS WITH TENOR OF NOTE.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD NOT ACT AS INTERMEDIARY IN CARRYING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN DIGGS AND NEWSMEN, SINCE WE BELIEVE SAG WOULD REGARD THIS AS CONTRARY TO ITS REGULATIONS GOVERNING PASSENGERS IN TRANSIT. HOWEVER, IF SAG REFUSES PERMIT PRESS CONFERENCE YOU SHOULD TELL DFA THAT YOU WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO CONVEY TO LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN NEWS MEDIA ANY STATEMENT DIGGS MIGHT WISH TO ISSUE. WE CONSIDER THIS APPROPRIATE IN LIGHT OF DIGGS' STANDING AS IMPORTANT MEMBER LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF USG.

3. BEGIN FYI. IF APPROPRIATE BECAUSE OF CONTENT OF STATEMENT, YOU MAY WISH TO EMPHASIZE TO MEDIA REPS THAT STATEMENT IS DIGGS' OWN AND THAT TRANSMISSION BY EMBASSY REPS DOES NOT SIGNIFY APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL. END FYI. KISSINGER

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